

# PEOPLE and THINGS: By ATTICUS

SOME weeks ago I heard a fanciful conversation between two Socialists who ascribed much of the Labour Party's troubles to Mr. Gaitskell's school career. It seemed that prefect Hugh Gaitskell had trodden on the toes of his fellow Wykehamist Richard Crossman, and neither of them had ever fully recovered.

In fact Richard Crossman was head of the school while young Gaitskell could only get his feet on the lower rungs of the prefectorial ladder. At both Winchester and New College, Gaitskell's career could be covered by the phrase "late developer."

## Record Rise

The same phrase could not be applied to Hugh Gaitskell's parliamentary career. If he is elected leader of the Labour Party this week, he will have risen even faster than Bonar Law, the previous holder of the modern leadership record.

Bonar Law became leader exactly eleven years after he was first elected to the House. Mr. Gaitskell has been a Member for just ten years and five months.

Both men rose quickly because of their knowledge of economic matters, but then the similarity ends. Bonar Law was a compromise candidate, and Mr. Gaitskell is quite the reverse.

## Williamshurgers

POLITICIANS are always said to be reluctant to give up the cares of office, but I must say that I have never seen two more contented-looking men than Sir Winston Churchill and Mr. Attlee as they sat in familiar conversation at the end of last Wednesday evening's Williamsbury Award banquet at the Drapers' Hall. Matching riband for riband, they appeared as fresh, as never before, in the tranquil pleasures of retirement.

Some part of Sir Winston's pleasure may have been due to the exceptionally large number of old comrades, colleagues and friends, as he himself put it, who had come to do him honour. From the American side, the publisher and Admiral Stark, and Mr. Lewis Douglas, in particular, for whom alone, a galaxy beyond reckoning.

## That Medallion

Sir Winston's speech, though not the portentous pronouncement, for which some of his hearers were waiting, contained some fine examples of his most lapidary style.

My own favourite related to the idiosyncratic gold portrait-medallion of Sir Winston which Mr. Eisenhower recently designed with his own hand.

"I have not yet," the recipient was heard to say, "reached the conclusion of my correspondence with the President on this subject."

## Where Power Resides

THERE is one name in the book of trade, and only one, that makes all authors and publishers tremble. That is R. A. Last. The public has never heard of

Mr. Last and would not be particularly impressed to learn that he is manager of the book department of W. H. Smith and Son. Yet, in the book world, power resides in Mr. Last's hands and in that world, "How many will Last take?" is the sixty-four-dollar question. For Mr. Last's sell a decisive proportion of our daily reading.

## Last Judgments

Fortunately Mr. Last, a small upright man in his early fifties, is both kindly and scrupulously just, and his judgment, particularly in the case of young and striving writers, errs as far towards the generous as his commercial sense and responsibilities allow.

But about 14,000 new books and 6,000 reprints cross his desk every



Mr. Last of Smith's.

year, and this flood allows no room for personal tastes or prejudices. He has to order what the public will buy, or Smith's book department would go out of business.

As the books pour in—fiction, travel, biography, children's—Mr. Last picks each one up, notes the name, the publisher and the price, and the price, turns up the sales figures of the author's previous book, considers the appeal of the jacket, and says: "Ten copies," or, perhaps, "Ten thousand."

And the extraordinary fact (and, so far as the publisher is concerned, the deadly fact) is that Mr. Last is always right.

## The Guards Memorial

THE Brigade of Guards Memorial Cloister, leading from Birdcage Walk to the ruins of the Guards Chapel, will be finished in the spring, according to the architect, Captain H. S. Goodhart-Rendel.

The seven Books of Remembrance, five for the Foot Guards and two for the Household Cavalry, are already complete. The remaining pages have been inscribed with the names of those who fell in the last war and illuminated by Mr. William Gard-

ner, the heraldic designer who was responsible for the House of Commons Memorial Album.

## Dedication in May

In the spring, the Books of Remembrance will be placed in position in the seven niches above which sculptors are now at work carving the regional regimental badges, and there is a proposal that after the cloisters are dedicated in May a page of each book should be turned daily as a token of remembrance.

The total cost will, due to delays in obtaining a permit, be about £2,000 higher than the £22,000 originally estimated, and members and friends of the Household Brigade are being asked to free the memorial from debt before the dedication day. Of one thing they can be satisfied, the memorial will be worthy of the Brigade.

## A Canadian to Watch

MR. WALTER HARRIS, Canada's Finance Minister, will arrive in London tomorrow on his way to the N.A.T.O. Finance Ministers' meeting in Paris.

Although practically unknown outside Canada, Mr. Harris is tipped as a possible successor to Mr. St. Laurent as Prime Minister. A non-smoker and non-drinker, he is a very young-looking fifty-one, an excellent speaker and a sound party man with a wide administrative experience. He entered the Cabinet only five years ago as Minister for Citizenship and Immigration and made his mark so quickly that he became a natural successor to Mr. Abbott, whom he succeeded as Finance Minister a year ago.

## London's Artist

ONE of the late Hanslip Fletcher's closest friends was Professor A. E. Richardson, and last Wednesday the President of the Royal Academy, with the work of Hanslip Fletcher as his theme, fulminated genially before the London Society against the "hideous monstrosities" of modern architecture.

The friendship began in 1886, when the two men met at Birkbeck College, and they spent all their leisure hours exploring London. On Wednesday, Professor Richardson described how Hanslip Fletcher would plant himself firmly at the pavement of the town, sketching interminably and chatting with the passers-by.

Readers of THE SUNDAY TIMES between 1923-50 will remember with affection the weekly "Hanslip Fletcher," and Professor Richardson prophesied that in a hundred years' time writers and historians living in their "rectangular boxes" would gratefully consult these meticulous records of London's past glories.

## Ideal Prospero

SHAKESPEARE has already conferred a great deal of operatic history, Ambrose Thomas's Hamlet may not quite have stayed

the pace, but Othello, Falstaff, Macbeth, and Romeo have all jumped the orchestra pit with quite conspicuous success.

And now, I hear, Prospero is to do the same. Frank Martin, the Swiss composer whose "Golgatha" recently won a deserved success in London, has completed an operatic version of "The Tempest." This is to be produced in Vienna next June—the first new opera to be given in the reconstructed Opera House.

Such a work by a composer of Martin's distinction would seem in any case to be marked down for London; but what makes it, in my view, a "must" for Covent Garden

is the fact that the part of Prospero is to be sung by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, who is not only one of the most admired of living singers, but an ardent and lifelong Shakespearean with a particular passion for the fine management of words.

## Lloyd George's Statue

THE Lloyd George Memorial statue is likely to be erected on one of the two pedestals close to the Churchill Arch at the entrance to the House of Commons Chamber leading from the Members' Lobby.

I believe the committee set up to consider the most suitable site

is unanimous on this point. The final choice will give satisfaction to Sir Winston Churchill and to many others who feel that the memorial should be as near as possible to the Chamber where Lloyd George sat for fifty-five years and which he loved above all else.

Of the eight pedestals in the Members' Lobby, three are already occupied by the statues of Asquith, Churchill Chamberlain and Harcourt.

## Behind the Screens

A FINE battle is developing in the television audience research field. With the introduction of Independent Television, advertisers became vitally interested in

discovering which programmes, and even which parts of which programmes, are most popular.

Fairly precise answers can be obtained by fitting electronic microphones to a large number of carefully selected television sets. At the moment only two firms have the necessary equipment.

For a time it looked as though the whole field would be dominated by Mr. Arthur Nielsen, a vigorous American engineer of fifty-eight—so vigorous that he has twice won the National United States fathers-and-sons tennis championship.

## Nielsen v. Maddan

Mr. Nielsen has been applying engineering methods to market research for the last thirty years, and he tells me that he now employs 2500 people in his country and the United States. His "Audimeter" was first developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Now a British machine has been produced by T.A.M.—Television Audience Measurement—of the Wallace-Attwood group. This company, which seems to have won the first round, is directed by Mr. Bedford Attwood and Mr. John Maddan, one of the new young Conservative Members.

Mr. Maddan won his seat, Hitchin, against the expectations of the prophets. Now he must fight with equal energy to win the battle of the meters and with victory reaps a sizeable fortune.

## Progenitor

THE late Ugo Bettli, who was ignored here during his lifetime, has had three plays produced since the end of July and made a considerable mark with each of them.

Bettli's belated triumph may tempt our theatrical managers to be quicker away from the tapes with Diego Fabrizi, who is now as much in demand in Paris as Bettli five years ago. Fabrizi, though still in his early forties, is known in Italy as a film producer, as editor of a highbrow review, and as the author of plays which, in the words of one admirer, "recall Pirandello, but do not imitate him."

One aspect of his activities is likely to remain unchallenged—at any rate in a country whose most successful playwrights, Mr. Coward and Mr. Hattigan, are unrepentant bachelors. Signor Fabrizi has produced, to date, six plays and six children: the seventh play and the seventh child, I understand, expected any time now.

## Man's Best Enemy

A DETACHMENT of police dogs and handlers has just been despatched to Cyprus with the

blessings of Captain J. M. Rymer-Jones, the Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. He is the most visible admirer of police dogs that I have ever met; his whole body seems to vibrate with enthusiasm when describing the merits of these animals.

His admiration was first stimulated in Palestine where he saw a Doberman Pinscher track an Arab terrorist for twenty-two miles across stony ground. The dog subdued his quarry before dropping dead from exhaustion.

In London Captain Rymer-Jones has raised the number of dogs on



Rex III.

beat duty to 142, and my picture shows one of the stars of the team, Rex III, who recently made his eighteenth arrest a few days after being hurt in a tussle with an armed burglar.

## Laugh? I thought . . .

ONE would think it hardly possible to extract an ounce of humour from a crash-landing in the Atlantic, in the middle of the night, from 20,000 feet, but Trans-World Airlines think otherwise. Passengers in their new Super-C Constellation to New York are handed a booklet entitled "How to Ditch without a Hitch," illustrated with brightly coloured drawings of grinning people playing Canasta and knitting in a rubber lifeboat in the middle of the Atlantic.

Here is some of T.W.A.'s lappet-leaf: "Let's proceed to some pointers on Ditching Procedure . . . so you can take to the water as serenely as a seagull. . . Life vests are fashionable in emergency landings. Yours is bright yellow and quite handsomely tailored. . . Remove sharp objects such as pencils from your coat. Take off your glasses. Remove your collar. Remove your tie. . . Don't take any other clothes. . . You'll want to look your best when you land."

## Radiant Regiment

THE Christmas advertisement of Broadway haberdasher includes "GENUINE HAND-WEAVE TARTAN, ALSO IN BROWN AND RADIAN GREEN."